

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 46

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 25

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 46—Relative to skin cancer and melanoma awareness.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 10, 1999.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 46, Gallegos. Skin cancer and melanoma awareness.

This measure would declare that the month of May shall be recognized as Skin Cancer Awareness Month in California, and would encourage all Californians to make themselves and their families aware of the risk of skin cancer and the preventive measures. The measure would also proclaim May 3, 1999, as Melanoma Awareness Monday in California, to increase public awareness of the importance of routine complete skin examination to detect early melanoma.

WHEREAS, Malignant melanoma, a serious skin cancer, is characterized by the uncontrolled growth of pigment-producing tanning cells; and

WHEREAS, Melanoma has its beginnings in melanocytes, the skin cells that produce the dark protective pigment called melanin. Melanomas may suddenly appear without warning, but may also begin in or near a mole or other dark spot in the skin; and

WHEREAS, Melanoma generally begins as a mottled, light brown to black flat blemish with irregular borders, usually at least one-quarter inch in size. It may turn shades of red, blue or white, crust on the surface or bleed, and most frequently appears on the upper back torso, lower legs, head and neck; and

WHEREAS, Excessive exposure to the ultraviolet radiation of the sun is the most important preventable cause of melanoma. Other possible causes include genetic factors and immune deficiencies. Malignant melanoma has also been linked to past sunburns and sun exposure at younger ages; and

WHEREAS, Melanoma can affect men, women, and children, but individuals with increased risk include those with fair complexions, prior significant sunburns, a family member with melanoma, or a high number of atypical moles; and

WHEREAS, Atypical moles are unusual moles that are generally larger than normal moles, variable in color, often have irregular borders, and may occur in far greater number than regular moles; and

WHEREAS, The incidence of melanoma has doubled in the last 20 years, and it continues to rise faster than any other cancer in women, except for lung cancer. Melanoma is the most common form of cancer among people between 25 and 29 years of age, and experts estimate that if the present rate continues, soon melanoma will strike one in 75 Americans; and

WHEREAS, Six out of seven skin cancer deaths are from malignant melanoma. Advanced malignant melanoma spreads to other organs and may result in death. When detected early, surgical removal of thin melanomas can cure the disease in most cases; and

WHEREAS, Early detection is crucial. There is a direct correlation between the thickness of the melanoma and the survival rate. If a melanoma is detected and treated early, the cure rate is very high. Generally, as the disease advances, the tumor thickens and spreads, lowering the survival rate; and

WHEREAS, Correct aggressive treatment by qualified medical professionals can lead to positive results; and

WHEREAS, Melanoma in its early stages may only be detected by visual inspection. Dermatologists recommend regular self-examination of the skin to detect changes in its appearance, especially changes in existing moles or blemishes. Additionally, patients with risk factors should have a complete skin examination annually; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the month of May 1999 shall be recognized as Skin Cancer Awareness Month in California, and all Californians be encouraged to make themselves and their families aware of the risk of skin cancer and the preventive measures; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature hereby proclaims May 3, 1999, as Melanoma Awareness Monday in California to increase public awareness of the importance of routine complete skin examination to detect early melanomas.

